

Murray Arts Advisory Board  
Minutes for November 17, 2009

Attendance: Mildred Horton, Mary Black, Judy Baxendale, Jared Shaver, Sharon Whitney, Jen Davies, Mary Ann Kirk (staff) Breanna Hales and Katie Furner (student visitors).

Excused: John Madsen, Kathleen Sorenson, Elaine Judd

1. Minutes for October 20, 2009 were approved with a few minor corrections about the importance of the central valley location of the performing arts center.
2. A name to replace Jared has been submitted to the Mayor's office. Mildred and Jen will be reappointed.
3. Mary Ann reported the Steve James assemblies will be completed this week. There were 206 Halloween literary entries from 5 elementaries and 2 junior highs participating with 58 winners but not many winners came because of the weather. One night was cancelled because of snow. About 1300 students attended the arts power production performances, 27 artists with 48 entries are displayed in an art show at the library. Jared suggested the sign should be more obvious that the display is free and open to the public. He said that over half of the people had never seen the show before. Jared will help present the art winners with their checks. Some people have expressed interest in buying the artwork and we have referred them to the artists. Mary Ann will have some refreshments. The community art awards were well received with family members coming from out of town to support those recognized. Mildred shared the Mayor's public comments supporting the need for a performing arts center to house our local art organizations. Upcoming events were reviewed.

Mary Ann noted that Holladay City had a formal complaint about their community Messiah production with challenges about separation of church and state. Theirs is organized by local churches and the city helps sponsor it and the school district provides the space. Our program is produced by the Murray Symphony instead of churches as a classic historic composition and has been performed different times of the year.

4. Mary Ann reported that our winter series ticket sales are down to 16 passes this year. However this figure was corrected before minutes were approved that the number was actually 33 which was similar to last year. The numbers have gone up and down over the past decade. The highest was 60 in 2007-08 and then has dropped in half the past two years. It is unsure if this is because of the economy. Jared suggested we conduct a telephone campaign to find out why people are not renewing their season tickets. Board members or volunteers could call former ticket holders before or after a board meeting or when they are monitoring an art show to get some feedback. He also suggested the board or a director go around in the future and do short performances for groups such as the Heritage Center or other senior groups and sell season tickets on the spot.
5. Board members agreed a formal letter should be sent to City officials expressing support for the armory as a multi use facility that could provide weekly rehearsal and storage space for the symphony and band. Storage is critical because they are loading and unloading large expensive instruments and storing music and instruments in trailers and homes. Jared wasn't sure if there

was space for storage. Mary Ann has gone inside and felt there was plenty of space for storage. The city is considering CDBG funds to rehab the building which is used for capital hard cost projects. The board suggested Mary Ann draft a letter that supports a multi use function for the facility with some specified commitment for the symphony and band rehearsals and storage space. This building could be rented similar to a pavilion or used for community functions. Board members agreed it doesn't make sense to use it only for batting cages.

6. Arts in the Park season for 2010 is about finalized. Mary Ann asked if the season prices should stay the same. Jared suggested a special reserved section with a higher price since some older people come so early so they can get the best seats. Jared said Hale Center Theater did this and created a big revenue increase. Mary Ann wondered if it would really generate much revenue for the work it would require. She was concerned about who would do this since each performing group provides their own staff. Jared suggested the tech people could be in charge. He suggested a \$6 increase to the season price for reserved seats. Mary Ann noted that Sandy has individual seats that cost more with grass area seating at a lower cost. This might be a consideration when we rebuild the amphitheater. The amphitheater upgrade would be a good CDBG project.
7. Mary Ann reviewed some of the items she would like to add or clarify on the operational plan. Revenue for a gallery needs to be added. An art show typically gives a percentage of what they sell. The seating capacity of the main theater is at 500 because that was the highest demand and ideal size identified by local groups through the county master plan. If groups have more patrons, they can schedule two shows.

Mary Ann was not sure the revenue and expense for in-house productions should be part of the facility operational plan. Currently all program expenses are kept in separate line items rather than a facility budget. Grants have been used to cover program expenses for those activities that are free or do not have enough revenue to cover all expenses. The proposed operational plan also reflects ticket revenue related to performances by local arts groups who actually keep their own revenue. Jared noted that the consultants have designed the operational plan on how other similar facilities in the valley operate which includes in-house program expenses and ticket revenue. Mary Ann thought the rental revenue would cover the facility costs related to in-house productions which she thinks will be somewhat limited. Jared thought this skews the actual costs of the facility itself. Mary Ann expects all of the groups including community art groups to pay a fee for its use with the exception of performance nights that are part of our series. She doesn't want Murray City to become the producer but merely provide a facility that community organizations have access to rent. Jared felt that some programming such as an in-house theater company may be needed to fill the theater and bring in revenue to help support the facility. Mary Ann said it comes down to whether we want our revenue coming through ticket sales or by rentals. She would like to have ticket sale revenues pay for the in-house production expenses and the rentals to pay for facility operations.

Jennifer asked how we would manage the facility with other communities involved. Mary Ann explained how a facility manager would meet together with the main community arts groups to coordinate proposed schedules for rehearsal and performance dates. Then outside groups would be allowed to rent the facilities for other activities. This is the same process we use for the amphitheater but just on a larger scale with different spaces. The fees will vary for

commercial and non-profit, residents and non-residents. The consultants want us to work with the model to determine what combinations we need to operate in the black. Phil Jordan from Salt Lake County has suggested we go around and get commitments from groups who want to use the space on an ongoing basis. Jennifer said there is need for dance space for various private dance groups. These types of groups use Rose Wagner. Mary Ann said this facility will have that capability. However she feels the community ed dance program would be better served as part of a new Hillcrest Jr High facility. Mary Ann would like to attend ZAP meetings and invite groups who need a facility to talk to us if they are interested. Sharon said that some charter schools need performance space.

Mary Ann shared a few options for staffing. The current cultural arts manager position could be increased to a 40 hour position that oversees all the city art programs and scheduling but is focused more on facility management and making sure we have the facility utilized. A new 20-30 hour program coordinator would be paid at a lower rate and would implement the art programs both in and outside of the facility using volunteers as it is currently done. Or the cultural program manager position could remain the same with a totally different facility coordinator depending on how much you pay the facility manager. In either option, you would need building supervisors to work with rental set up needs, box office secretary, tech director and part time tech assistants, and custodial staff. The staffing may expand based on the amount of rentals. Custodial staff may be shared with new city offices. Jared suggested we contract a marketing manager on a percentage basis to recruit rentals between 6 am and 5 pm which are the down times of a facility but actually have potential for the highest rental revenue.

There was discussion about city philosophy related to subsidizing programs and facilities for all recreation programs. The softball and baseball fields are used heavily by other community organizations who do not pay for their maintenance or upkeep. The parks staff provides labor assistance for field preparation and line striping. Most program fees cover the cost of the program itself - not the facility labor or program staff who develop the programs or secretaries who take registration. The Parks Center is attempting to be self sufficient. However the city is still subsidizing its operations. There was some concern that the arts facility would be treated differently than other recreation programs if we required the building to cover all labor and program costs. Should all groups be treated the same with the same level of indirect support. However, Mary Ann said the overall goal is to bring in enough revenue from rental use to cover the building labor and maintenance costs.

Mildred asked when we are meeting with the city. Mary Ann said there was going to be a meeting in December to talk about the downtown plan. She said the county is presenting their cultural facilities grant application process in December. The U of U group is going to present to city council in January. That would be a time we can express support for the facility in the downtown area. Mary Ann will verify the times.